

REMARKS

Claims 1-10 and 12 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, the specification, and claims 1, 3 and 7, are amended. The amendments introduce no new matter. Reconsideration of the application based on the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The courtesies extended to Applicant's representative by Examiners Mack and Dinh during the October 3, 2006 personal interview are appreciated. The reasons presented at the interview as warranting favorable action are incorporated into the remarks below and constitute Applicant's record of the interview.

The Office Action objects to Figs. 11(a) and 11(b) as failing to show the light-shielding film 23, as described in paragraph [0094] of the specification. The specification is amended to delete the specific reference to element 23 thereby obviating the objection. Withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-10 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph. The Office Action asserts that the term "separation surface" in claims 1 and 3 is not sufficiently described in the specification. Without conceding the propriety of this rejection, and solely to advance prosecution of this application, claims 1 and 3 are amended to obviate this rejection. Specifically, the term "separation surface" is replaced with the term "rear end portion" and the term "initial contact surface" is replaced with the term "head end portion." Support for the amended terms can be found at least in paragraphs [0085] and [0075] of the specification, respectively.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-10 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Based on the discussions presented during the personal interview, the rejection under 35 U.S.C.

§112, second paragraph, has been withdrawn. Applicant appreciates the withdrawal of this rejection.

The Office Action rejects claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over JP 2001-305552 to Suichi in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,155,612 to Adachi et al. (hereinafter "Adachi"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Office Action acknowledges that Suichi fails to disclose the light-shielding film formed between the counter substrate and the counter electrode. The Office Action relies on Adachi to fill this shortfall. During the personal interview, the Examiner referred to Fig. 1 of Suichi as disclosing spacers 202 arranged along gaps among the pixel electrodes. However, Suichi does not teach the light-shielding film including pole-like spacers, as positively recited in claim 12. Adachi, which is relied upon for the light-shielding film formed between the counter substrate and the counter electrode, is not applied in a manner to overcome this shortfall, nor does it teach, or otherwise render obvious such a feature.

As such, the applied prior art references do not teach, nor can they reasonably be considered to have suggested, the positively recited feature of a light-shielding film formed between the counter substrate and the counter electrode, the light-shielding film including pole-like spacers arranged along gaps among the pixel electrodes.

The above arguments were presented during the personal interview, but agreement was not reached regarding the extent to which the applied prior art references could reasonably be considered to teach, or to have suggested, the combination of all of the features recited in claim 12.

For at least these reasons, the applied prior art references do not teach, nor can they reasonably be considered to have suggested, the combination of all the features recited in independent claim 12. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 12 as being unpatentable over the applied prior art references is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-10 and 12 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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